

Chapter 4

The Stevens Creek Basin Planning Process

4. Stevens Creek Basin Planning Process

This section of the Summary Report examines the planning process followed in the formulation of the *Planning Guidelines* presented earlier in this Report. As shown in the following diagram, this process involved a six major task areas designed to be undertaken over a twelve month period.

Working Time Line

Task	2000									2001		
	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M
Base Planning Information	Data & Information Collection											
Open House Meetings		4 Mtgs										
Conceptual Plan Comm.			Monthly Meetings									
Planning/Dev. Issues	Identify Issues											
Conceptual Planning Proposal									Develop Proposal & Integrate into Comp Plan			
Public Involvement	Web-site, Open Houses, Newsletter, Community Organizations, and Conceptual Plan Committee											

The remainder of this section is divided into the following subsections: A. Planning Process: Initiation Stage; and, B. Stevens Creek Basin Initiative Task Force.

A. Planning Process: Initiation Stage

The initial steps in the Stevens Creek Basin Initiative planning process involved four "community open houses," a series of stakeholder interviews, and the establishment of a "public comments system." These activities were intended to serve several objectives in advance of the establishment of a citizens task force that would ultimately oversee the drafting of the Planning Guidelines. These objectives included: 1. introducing the community to the Stevens Creek Basin Initiative planning process; 2.

soliciting comments from the community about the process and the future of Stevens Creek; 3. meeting with groups and individuals who have a direct interest in the Creek's future; and, 4. gathering information about the Basin for use in the planning process.

Four "community open houses" were held at various locations throughout the Stevens Creek Basin during May of 2000. These locations included:

1. Crooked Creek Golf Course, East 134th and 'O' Street
2. Southeast Community College, 8800 East 'O' Street
3. Grace Lutheran Church, 11640 East 'A' Street
4. Hidden Valley Golf Course, 10501 Pine Lake Road

Notices of the "community open houses" were mailed in advance of the sessions to all the property owners in the Basin.

The four open houses were designed to be informal gatherings allowing the public to talk with staff about their ideas concerning the future of the Basin. Members of the public were invited to come and spend as much time as they liked discussing their thoughts. Each open house session was scheduled to run for approximately three and a half hours. Written comments were encouraged, with forms provided at each site for the public to use to record their opinions. All of the sessions were well attended. The issues identified by the public through this process are discussed later in this report.

During this same period, Planning Department staff undertook a series of interviews with individuals and groups who might have a current or future interest in the Basin. These "stakeholder interviews" were designed to elicit issues that these individuals or groups might have about planning for the Basin. The findings from these interviews were used to highlight areas of concern in advance of the preparation of the Planning Guidelines. The results of the stakeholder interviews are presented in the following chapter of this report.

The community as a whole was also encouraged to submit their ideas about the Basin's future through the Planning Department's Internet website. A special comments webpage was set up that allowed the user to electronically submit their thoughts and concerns. The comments

submitted through this medium were both published on the website and incorporated into the issues summary materials made available to the Stevens Creek Basin Initiative Task Force.

B. Stevens Creek Basin Initiative Task Force

The primary focal point of the Stevens Creek Basin Initiative planning process was a seventeen member Task Force. The mission of this "Stevens Creek Basin Planning Initiative Task Force" was to develop *Planning Guidelines* for the future of the Stevens Creek Basin.

The members of the Task Force were appointed by Lincoln Mayor Don Wesely, the Lincoln City Council, and the Lancaster County Board of Commissioners. Two City-County Planning Commissioners also served as members of the Task Force.



The Task Force held a total of 12 working meetings between August 2000 and February 2001. Included in these sessions was two hour bus tour of the Basin. All of there meetings were open to

the public.

The Task Force began their deliberations with two informational briefings on the background of the planning process and the key Basin-area issues identified through the open house, stakeholder and public comment efforts.

Task Force members identified additional topics that represented their needs for information and also created an initial list of nine categories that would provide the framework for drafting of the Planning Guidelines. These included: Natural and Cultural Resources; Agriculture; Residential; Commercial; Parks and Recreation; Industrial; Community Facilities; Transportation; and Utilities. (A tenth category – "Urbanization" – was added later.)

At this point in the process, each Task Force meeting was divided into two working sessions. During the first portion of each meeting, concurrent discussion sessions were held on topics identified by Task Force members. Invited presenters or Planning Department staff led each of these sessions. During the second part of each meeting, the Task Force was organized into several small groups that began the work of drafting guidelines on the development of the Basin.

Guidelines were drafted on each of the original nine topics, with the subheadings of "Current," "Transition" and "Future" situations. Each small group was responsible not only for working together to draft their section but also for reviewing the work of other small groups. Much of this was done as part of "homework" assignments. Task Force members did a considerable amount of work outside of the regular meetings to suggest guidelines, review or comment on the work of others.



After small groups had developed and reviewed guidelines, the total group used a modified voting procedure to indicate support, disagreement or neutrality for statements. The entire Task Force membership did the final editing.

Through this process guidelines were built by individuals, shared and modified in small, sub-groups, refined by commentary and then edited and accepted by the larger group. This process built consensus on the guidelines and, matched with informational session and a site tour of the Basin, increased the understanding of Basin issues among the Task Force members.

Work sessions were characterized by excellent attendance, an informal atmosphere and very high participation by the members. The group developed collegial relationships and evaluations by the members indicated high satisfaction with both the process and the product.

The Task Force process included a "Public Comments Forum" held at Gere Library on February 6, 2000. Nearly one hundred community members were in attendance at the session. A dozen members of the public provided verbal testimony to that Task Force at the Forum. The public comments are summarized in the appendix of this report.